

Task Force Hudelson Unit Operations
January 1, 1945
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HEADQUARTERS CC"R"
14TH ARMORED DIVISION, A. P. O. 446
U S ARMY



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NON RECORD MATERIAL
WW II RECORDS DIV, NARS

9 January 1945

HISTORY CC"R" 14TH ARMORED DIVISION, MONTH DEC 1944

On the 1st January, 1945, all records and documents of this Headquarters were destroyed by burning due to imminent capture in the vicinity of BABENTHAL, FRANCE. Therefore, it becomes necessary to construct the following written history from memory and limited information from other sources. No supporting documents are available to attach.

After the advance through the Haguenau forest and north to the vicinity WISSEMBOURG by the 14th Armored Division, Hq CC"R" marched to the vicinity of NIEDER-BETSCHDORF (41333) and set up headquarters, 14 Dec 44. On the 15th Dec 44, the Headquarters moved on north to Oberseebach (41841) with the mission of supporting either CC"A" or CC"B".

At this time there were attached the 68 AIB, 94 Cav Sqd (-) and B-84 Medical Bn. The headquarters remained in this location without incident and made plans and reconnaissance for relief or reinforcement of either combat command. On 19th Dec 44, 68 AIB relieved the 62 AIB, part of CCA, with the 62 AIB being placed under CC"R" control.

On 22 Dec 44, CC"R" arrived in the vicinity of BABENTHAL, FRANCE, with the mission of defending part of the Corps sector in the Vosges mountains. Under our command at this time were the following units: 62 AIB, 117 Cav Sqd, 94 Cav Sqd (-), 500 AFA, (17 FA in support), 1-540 Combat Engr, A-125 Armd Eng, B-645 TD Bn, B-83 Chem Mortar Bn. The defensive sector then held by CC"R" was a line just south of Bitch (47749), Equeishardt (48246), Neunhoffen (9146). CCR was officially designated Task Force Hudelson by Hq VI Corps.

For the ensuing 9 day period Task Force Hudelson organized its defensive sector. Defensive wire was placed in front of all positions with the strength of the defense dependent largely on strong points due to the character of the terrain and small number of troops assigned to this wide sector. The 62 AIB was placed on the right of the sector with the 117 and 94 Cavalry on the left. The 1st Bn 540 Eng was given the mission of maintaining all roads and bridges in the sector and of acting as the task force reserve. 500 AFA Bn supported the task force sector with the 17 FA Bn under its control. Other supporting troops were attached to the front line units in the defensive organization. By 25th Dec 44, organization of the OPLR was completed and work was begun on the main line of resistance which was completed by the 31st Dec 44.

On the 31st Dec 44 it became apparent that the enemy would attack somewhere on the Corps front. Enemy patrols were very active throughout the evening of the 31st and at midnight a strong attack was launched by the enemy throughout the Task Force sector. Communication remained good and reports were received that our troops were holding with the exceptions of forward outposts. At approximately 0300A 1 Jan. 45, the 117 Cav reported the enemy had overrun two forward platoons and had infiltrated to the rear. Permission was given to fall back to the main line of resistance which was accomplished without undue loss. At about the same time reports came from the 62 AIB of extreme pressure by the enemy, with some forward elements cut off. Orders were given to fall back to the MLR which was also accomplished without difficulty.

All units having fallen back to the MLR and Unit reserves having been committed the Task Force commander then committed 1st Bn 540 Eng in an attempt to stem enemy infiltrations south of Bannstein. This action met with only limited success inasmuch as enemy penetrations were in too great a depth and the enemy

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controlled the road between Bannstein and Baerenthal. A-Co 125 Bngr were ordered to hold along the road running south from Bannstein. This was also accomplished with little success, the enemy strength being overwhelming along the road and south-west toward Baerenthal.

From this time on information to the CP was negligible and cannot be taken as strictly authentic due to the confusion of the situation. It may be said that little if any contact was maintained between units. The enemy had overrun most positions in the left center of the sector.

Reinforcements were requested by the Task Force commander and a message was received that the 19 AIB and A-Co of the 25 Tk Bn were enroute to Baerenthal. The 19 AIB arrived in Baerenthal at approximately 0800A and the Bn less 1 Co was ordered to counterattack in the 117 Cav zone in order to restore the main line of resistance which by that time had been overrun in some parts. The other company of the 19 AIB was to attack in the vicinity of Bannstein in order to relieve pressure on C Co of the 62nd, which was partially surrounded.

The above mentioned attacks were launched by 1100A with only limited success. The enemy attack had by this time grown to sizable proportions and PW information indicated three enemy Divisions in the assault.

Although our attacks were launched the enemy had cut the Phillipsbourg-Baerenthal and Mouterhouse-Baerenthal roads, thus cutting the Task Force Hq from all communications, with the exception of radio, with lower units.

At approximately 1200A hours the Task Force CP came under observed artillery fire and small arms. All members of the task force headquarters were ordered by the commanding officer to form a perimeter defense and defend the CP.

All communication wires having been cut by artillery and liaison being impossible, it was attempted to communicate by radio with our units. Radio failed with all units except the 62 AIB who informed the commander that A and B Co's were still holding out against mounting resistance but that C Co had been completely overrun. It then became evident that the counterattack in that sector had failed.

At approximately 1400A Tanks of A Co 25 Tk Bn began arriving in Baerenthal, their advance to there having been greatly impaired by the icy mountain roads. The enemy in Baerenthal were quickly destroyed and the tanks were ordered to advance on to Phillipsbourg and to relieve the pressure on the 62 AIB. No tanks were sent to Mouterhouse to aid the situation with the Cavalry units there inasmuch as the enemy held a strong road block between the towns. At this time the Headquarters had no knowledge of the situation with the Cavalry, and it being impossible to contact these units it was thought best by the Commander to relieve pressure against units on the right only, and thereby gain control over at least part of the sector. This was accomplished with good results in the 62 AIB sector and they were thereby able to hold their lines with the aid of 1 Tk Plt, the other two platoons returning to Baerenthal.

Enemy shelling of the Task Force CP continued throughout the afternoon, and at approximately 1700 hours the 275 Infantry relieved Task Force Hudelson by order of VI Corps headquarters. Task Force Hudelson was ordered to move to the vicinity of Reipertswiller and hold the line in that general area. All units in contact were ordered to fall back upon relief and assemble in the vicinity of Zinswiller. (Cavalry units could not be communicated with and therefore could not be informed).

Upon reaching Reipertswiller the commanding officer immediately dispatched the remaining elements of A-Co, 19 AIB and A Co 125 Bn 1-mile north along the Baerenthal-Reipertswiller road in order to stop the enemy attack. This was accomplished with excellent results, and although these units were attacked by what later proved to be one enemy battalion, they held the enemy from Reipertswiller on the evening of Jan. 1.

At approximately 2100A the CO 117 Cavalry (Also under his command 94 Cav Sq, 19 AIB(-)) reported to the Task Force CP informing that his command had fallen back,--having been overrun by the enemy--to a line running generally Sarrensbουργ, Wingen, Wimmenau. The 62 AIB could not be relieved until the following day due to heavy engagement with the enemy.

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Effective 0001 Jan. 2, 1945, Task Force Hudelson was dissolved by Corps order and CC"R" was ordered back to 14th Armored Division control.

After consulting various staff and line officers of the units under Task Force Hudelson it was revealed that the enemy attack was extremely costly to the German divisions. In no operation by the units involved had there been witnessed such a wholesale slaughter of the enemy. In some cases he came in waves through our wire only to be cut down by machine gun cross fire. It was such waves of enemy, with no regard to the tactics of fire and movement, that cost him an estimated 2000 men to advance from Bannstein to Reipertswiller. The troops of Task Force Hudelson made a superb stand in the face of overwhelming numbers of enemy.

Some of our equipment was lost to the enemy, but personnel losses have proved to be very light in comparison to the damage inflicted on the enemy. The commander and Staff of Task Force Hudelson feel that the gallant stand made by the units under our command was the primary reason for the enemy's only limited advance south through the Vosges mountains.



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Historian

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